2.0 IDENTIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF AREAS TO BE EVALUATED

The Shoshone River project area is located west of Cody, Wyoming. The project area extends from the Shoshone National Forest boundary on the west, to Cody in the east. It includes both the North and South Forks of the Shoshone River west and south of the Buffalo Bill Reservoir. Highway 14 runs through the project area; it is also known as Highway 16, Highway 20, and the North Fork Highway. Four priority areas for assessment were identified by BLM and the PCFPD #2 (**see Figure 2-1**). These areas are made up of private land. Most are located west of Buffalo Bill Reservoir along drainages off of the North Fork of the Shoshone River near Highway 14. One assessment area is located just north of Buffalo Bill Reservoir along the North Fork; one is located east of Buffalo Bill Reservoir along the South Fork; and one is located south of Buffalo Bill Reservoir along the South Fork.

The priority areas were broken into 18 communities for hazard assessment. Communities were designated based on common characteristics for wildland fire assessment (**Figure 2-2**). Communities are discussed further in Section 4.2.1. The PCFPD #2 provides primary response for fire fighting for these communities; their resources and preparedness are discussed in Section 6.0.

The Shoshone River area has been significantly affected by wildland fire in the past. Fire ignitions and future wildland fire risk are discussed further in Section 3.0. The effects of past wildland fire on the local community are discussed in Section 5.1. The remainder of this section briefly discusses demographics, topography, and climate for the project area.

2.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The Cody Country Chamber of Commerce reports the population of Cody in the year 2000 as 8,825 (Cody Country Chamber of Commerce 2004). The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the population for Park County in the year 2003 at 26,284 and for the state of Wyoming at 501,242 (U.S. Census Bureau 2004).

The racial profiles for Park County and Wyoming in the year 2000 are summarized in **Table 2-1** (U.S. Census Bureau 2004).

TABLE 2-1   2000 RACIAL PROFILES

	Park County	Wyoming
White persons	96.5%	92.1%
Black or African American persons	0.1%	0.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons	0.5%	2.3%
Asian persons	0.4%	0.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%
Persons reporting some other race	1.4%	2.5%
Persons reporting two or more races	1.1%	1.8%

Figure 2-1   Priority Areas

Figure 2-2   Communities Evaluated for Wildland Fire Hazard

The U.S. Census Bureau recorded 10,312 households in Park County and 193,608 in the state of Wyoming in the year 2000. The Bureau reports that the 1999 median household income was $35,829 in Park County, compared to $37,892 for the entire state, and that the 1999 per capita income was $18,020 in Park County, compared to $19,134 for the entire state (U.S. Census Bureau 2004).

2.2 TOPOGRAPHY

The topography for the project area generally consists of foothills originating from the Absaroka Range to the west and ending in the Big Horn Basin to the east. Elevations within the project area range from approximately 5,200 to 10,500 feet above sea level. The project area is surrounded by a number of mountains including Sheep, Table, Jim, Logan, Cedar, and Rattlesnake Mountains. The project area is dominated by long drainages from the foothills into the North and South Forks of the Shoshone River.

2.3 CLIMATE DATA

Climate in the project area is semi-arid with an average annual temperature of 46 degrees Fahrenheit (°F). January is the coolest month with an average monthly temperature of 24°F, and July is the warmest month with an average monthly temperature of 72°F. The area receives an average of 9.4 inches of rain and 32.2 inches of snow (Cody Country Web Site 2004). Winds in the project area generally blow from the North March through October. Between November and February, winds generally originate from the west or west-southwest (WRCC 2004).

The project area is classified as a Class 2 air shed (BLM 2004). Air quality is discussed further in Section 5.2.